



Food: EU consumers to benefit from better labelling as of 13 December 2014

Brussels, 11 December 2014

As of 13 December 2014, new EU food labelling^[1] rules, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2011, will ensure that consumers receive clearer, more comprehensive and accurate information on food content, and help them make informed choices about what they eat.

The EU Commissioner in charge of Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis said: "*As of 13 December 2014, European citizens will see the results of years of work to improve food labelling rules. Key content information will now be more clearly marked on labels, helping people make informed choices on the food they buy. The new rules put the consumer first by providing clearer information, and in a way that is manageable for businesses.*"

Key changes

Some of the key changes to the labelling rules are outlined below:

- Improved legibility of information (minimum font size for mandatory information);
- Clearer and harmonised presentation of [allergens](#) (e.g. soy, nuts, gluten, lactose) for prepacked foods (emphasis by font, style or background colour) in the list of ingredients;
- Mandatory allergen information for non-prepacked food, including in restaurants and cafes;
- Requirement of certain nutrition information for majority of prepacked processed foods;
- Mandatory origin information for fresh meat from pigs, sheep, goats and poultry;
- Same labelling requirements for online, distance-selling or buying in a shop;
- List of engineered nanomaterials in the ingredients.
- Specific information on the vegetable origin of refined oils and fats;
- Strengthened rules to prevent misleading practices;
- Indication of substitute ingredient for 'imitation' foods;
- Clear indication of "formed meat" or "formed fish"; and
- Clear indication of defrosted products.

However, rules relating to mandatory nutritional labelling for processed food will only apply from 13 December 2016.

Food business operators have been given three years to ensure a smooth transition towards the new labelling regime for prepacked and non-prepacked foods. In addition, the Regulation provides for exhaustion of stocks for foods placed on the market or labelled before 13 December 2014 (N.B. this does not include exhaustion of stocks of labels).

The Commission has been working together with businesses to ensure that the new rules will be properly implemented. Work is also underway on developing an EU database to facilitate the identification of all EU and national mandatory labelling rules in a simple way. This will offer a user-friendly tool for all food business operators and for SME's to consult. The work for the creation of the database should be carried out during 2015.

Background

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of information to consumers replaces and combines into one piece of legislation previous labelling rules deriving from Directive 2000/13/EC regarding labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs and Directive 90/496/EEC on nutrition labelling of foodstuffs and other legislative acts for specific categories of foods.

For more information

[MEMO/14/2561](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/eu-new-fish-and-aquaculture-consumer-labels-pocket-guide_en.pdf

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[1][Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#)

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